

Message Text

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43

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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R 260915Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5191

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY RABAT

USMISSION USUN NY

S E C R E T NOUAKCHOTT 0450

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR SS MR MO AG JO

SUBJECT: SAHARA WATCH: JORDANIAN-MAURITANIAN DISCUSSIONS

REF: AMMAN 895 (NOTAL, NOUAKCHOTT 177, NOUAKCHOTT 445

1. OVER PAST TWO MONTHS PRIVATE COMMENTS AND PUBLIC STATEMENTS OF GIRM OFFICIALS AT ALL LEVELS HAVE BECOME INCREASINGLY MORE CRITICAL OF ALGERIA AND PRESIDENT BOUMEDIENE IN INCREASINGLY MORE EXPLICIT AND SPECIFIC TERMS. GIRM MINISTERS AND BUREAU-CRATS ASSERT BOUMEDIENE EXPLICITLY AGREED TO MAURITANIAN/MOROCCAN PARTITION OF SAHARA AT 1972 OAU SUMMIT IN RABAT, AND THAT HE SUBSEQUENTLY REITERATED HIS ACCEPTANCE OF PARTITION IN BILATERAL AND TRILATERAL CONVERSATIONS AND IN ARAB LEAGUE AND UN MEETINGS. THEY FURTHER ASSERT THAT ALGERIA ABRUPTLY REVERSED ITSELF IN EARLY 1975 AND VIOLENTLY TITTACKED MAURITANIA WITHOUT WARNING AT JULY KAMPALA NU FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING. MOST RECENT AND PERHAPS MOST AUTHORITATIVE PRESENTATION OF MAURITANIAN ANALYSIS AND STATEMENT GIRM POSITION IS FIRST-PERSON SINGULAR ACCOUNT WRITTEN BY PRESIDENT OULD DADDAH FOR FEBRUARY 27 JEUNE AFRIQUE (NUMBER 790: "GENESIS OF A CONFRONTATION"). (SHOULD BE NOTED

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AT THIS POINT, HOWEVER, THAT IN PAST WEEK MAURITANIAN

INFORMATION MEDIA--ALL GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED--HAVE RETURNED TO GIRM-IMPOSED POLICY OF NO REACTION TO ALGERIAN BARBS WHICH PREVAILED UNTIL LATE JANUARY.)

2. FACT OF DIRECT MAURITANIAN-ALGERIAN CONFRONTATION AT BECHAR MEETING NOVEMBER 10 BEGAN TO SEEP OUT SOON AFTER MAURITANIAN CHIEF OF STATE RETURNED TO NOUAKCHOTT. SPECIFICS HAVE SINCE SURFACED IN OULD DADDAH'S PRESENTATION TO NASONAM COUNCIL OF PARTY (NOUAKCHOTT 252) AND PREAMBULAR PARAGRAPHS TO RESULTING COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS (NOUAKCHOTT 260).

3. BUT STARKNESS OF BECHAR CONFRONTATION AND HARSHNESS OF LANGUAGE USED BETWEEN CHIEFS OF STATE HAS ONLY RECENTLY COME TO HAND. MAURITANIAN FOREIGN MINISTER OULD MOUKNASS A FEW DAYS AGO DESCRIBED SPECIFICS AND ATMOSPHERICS OF HEAD-ON COLLISION BETWEEN OULD DADDAH AND BOUMEDIENE TO NEW BRITISH AMBASSADOR. ACCORDING TO THIS EYE-WITNESS REPORT, CLIMAX OF CONFRONTATION CAME WHEN ALGERIAN PRESIDENT BRUTALLY THREATENED TO "ERASE MAURITANIA FROM MAP" IF IT PERSISTED IN ITS EFFORTS TO REATTACH WADI DHEHAB TO MAURITANIA. OULD DADDAH REPORTEDLY ACKNOWLEDGED MAURITANIA'S WEAKNESS, BUT DECLARED IN RESPONSE THAT MAURITANIA "WOULD FIGHT TO LAST MAN TO DEFEND AND PRESERVE ITS HONOR, DIGNITY AND INDEPENDENCE".

4. FACT BECHAR CONFRONTATION WAS QUICKLY FOLLOWED BY ARMED ATTACKS ON MAURITANIAN SETTLEMENTS AND BY CONTINUING POLITICAL PRESSURE AND ECONOMIC WARFARE, IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT OULD DADDAH CONVEYED "VERY ANTI-ALGERIAN FRAME OF MIND" TO JORDANIAN SPECIAL EMISSARY. HANDYSIDE

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